

BUILDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR.

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

A COPY OF A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND LABOR SUBMITTING ESTIMATES FOR AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING FOR THE DEPARTMENT.

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FEBRUARY 23, 1903.—Referred to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds and ordered to be printed.

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,  
*Washington, February 23, 1903.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress a communication from the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, submitting estimates for an appropriation for the construction of a suitable building for the Department of Commerce and Labor.

Respectfully, yours,

L. M. SHAW, *Secretary.*

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Washington, D. C.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,  
*Washington, February 23, 1903.*

SIR: I have the honor to request that the following estimate for the construction of a suitable building for the Department of Commerce and Labor be transmitted to Congress:

At the beginning of the coming fiscal year the Department of Commerce and Labor will consist of twelve organizations transferred to it

from other branches of the public service, two new bureaus, and the office proper of the Secretary—in all, fifteen organized offices. These offices will be housed, under present arrangements, in ten or more different buildings. The Census Office is on B street, between First and Second streets NW.; the Coast and Geodetic Survey is on New Jersey avenue, near B street SE.; the Bureau of Foreign Commerce is in the State, War, and Navy building. Between these limits of about a mile and a half east and west, and about one-third of a mile north and south, are distributed the remaining organizations of the Department.

The Light-House Board and the Bureau of Navigation are at 719-721 Thirteenth street, NW.; the National Bureau of Standards on New Jersey avenue, near B street, SE.; the Immigration Bureau, the Steamboat-Inspection Service, and the Alaska Seal and Salmon Fisheries in the Treasury Building; the Commission of Fish and Fisheries at Sixth and B streets, SW.; the Department of Labor at Fifteenth street and New York avenue, NW., and the Bureau of Statistics at 1333 F street, NW. Quarters for the office of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor and for the new Bureaus of Manufactures and Corporations have not yet been chosen. The delay, inconvenience, and expense in the transaction of daily business by so scattered an organization will be evident at once both to Congress and to the commercial and industrial interests of the country.

The annual rent during the current fiscal year for only four of these organizations (Department of Labor, Census Office, Bureau of Statistics, and Light-House Board) amounts to \$44,544. Rented quarters are now provided, or soon must be provided, for nine of the remaining organizations in the Department of Commerce and Labor.

On July 1, the Department of Commerce and Labor will employ in the city of Washington about 1,300 men and women. The precise number can not be stated until the new bureaus have been organized.

The present needs of the new Department have been briefly mentioned in order to show the importance of early action by Congress to supply them. In any project for the building which Congress may approve it is earnestly recommended that provision be made for the future growth of the Department which will accompany the development of the commerce and industry of the United States.

The site to be secured should not only suffice for the structure required to house under one roof the branches of the public service to be assembled in July under the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, but should be ample for extensions of the edifice from time to time, in harmony with original plans, and with requirements of the increasing artistic sense of the people. The building for the Department of Commerce and Labor at the national capital, it is suggested, should be so planned in advance as to be not inferior in convenience or beauty to the structures which commercial and financial institutions in the great centers of American trade are erecting for the transaction of their daily business. It should be designed on a scale large enough to provide for the reasonable growth for some years to come of the various branches of the public service comprising at the outset the Department, and to supply quarters for such other branches of the service as by creation or transfer may hereafter be brought under its jurisdiction.

It should have at least one hall suitable for conferences or Congresses, international or national, which, by invitation of the Govern-

ment of the United States, have met in this country in the past, and doubtless hereafter will assemble frequently at Washington. To secure light and ventilation, inner courts open to the sky are necessary. The edifice should be fireproof.

Such a department building is needed to meet the requirements of progressive business methods. It is needed to give adequate expression to the country's advance in the art of architecture. It is a proper part of any general project to render more beautiful the national capital. It is in the line, furthermore, of true economy.

The Treasury building cost \$7,250,540, but is already inadequate for the needs of that Department, which this year, according to the estimates, will spend \$18,894 in rents for outside offices. The State, War and Navy building cost \$10,071,916, but the Departments it houses will this year spend \$25,260 for rented offices, and more offices must be secured for the coming fiscal year. The Patent Office cost \$3,652,705, but this year the Interior Department will be required to spend \$80,680 for rented buildings (including \$26,680 for the Census Office, transferred to the Department of Commerce and Labor). The new Post-Office cost \$3,305,490, but from the beginning was inadequate for the Post-Office Department, which this year will spend \$36,406 for rented offices.

Probably none of the Department buildings mentioned could be enlarged without a departure from original plans so radical as to destroy its symmetry and thus to forbid such enlargement. Had the growth of the business of the country and of these Departments been foreseen, doubtless at the outset larger sites and different plans would have been provided. On the other hand, in the case of the Capitol, built and extended for \$17,071,849, increased accommodations in consonance with original plans at a cost of about \$6,000,000 are now proposed. In the case of the Library of Congress, recently completed at a cost of \$6,920,081, such extensions are also possible.

I earnestly recommend, therefore, that Congress provide for the construction of a building for the Department of Commerce and Labor to cost, exclusive of the site, the sum of \$7,000,000.

Very respectfully,

GEO. B. CORTELYOU,  
*Secretary.*

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.